THE NEW 52!
DC COMICS™
24
NIGHTWING™
A CITY AFLAME...
...A HERO ALONE!
DEC 2013
RATED T TEEN
KYLE HIGGINS
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The Prankster and his men are terrorizing Chicago.
The city's on lockdown.
And Tony Zucco, the man who killed my parents, claims to be the only one who knows what's really going on.
This is so not how I saw today going.
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IF YOU WOULD JUST *LISTEN* TO ME FOR A SECOND-- I CAME TO *YOU.*
WHY THE HELL WOULD I *RISK THAT* IF THIS WEREN'T--
YOU'RE A LIAR, A MANIPULATOR, AND A *MURDERER.* AND YOU *"CAME"* TO ME CARRYING A LOADED *GUN.*
NNG!
I'M SURE YOU CAN COME UP WITH ALL *SORTS* OF REASONS.
BUT YOU'RE GONNA DO IT FROM BEHIND *BARS.*
DAMMIT, WE DON'T HAVE *TIME* FOR THIS. I *CAME* TO YOU BECAUSE I KNOW WHO THE PRANKSTER IS...
HKK!
...AND *YOU'RE* THE ONLY ONE IN THIS CITY WHO HAS A SHOT AT *STOPPING* HIM.
KRAK
GUH!
WALLACE COLE BECAME MAYOR OF CHICAGO BECAUSE OF TWO EVENTS--

"--A TRAIN LINE THAT HE AND HIS BROTHER WILLIAM CONVINCED CITY HALL TO RUN THROUGH THEIR OLD PILSEN NEIGHBORHOOD--
"--AND WILLIAM TAKING THE FALL WHEN THE PROJECT'S ELECTRICAL ENGINEER--HAROLD LOOMIS--*DIED* ON *HALLOWEEN.*
THAT'S WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT FOR THE PRANKSTER. IT'S NOT SOME COMPLEX MORALITY STATEMENT. HELL, THE MAYOR NEVER EVEN *STOLE* THAT MONEY.
NO, THE PRANKSTER TERRORIZING THE CITY IS ABOUT SOMETHING MUCH SIMPLER. *THIS...*
"...IS ABOUT A *SON* WHO WANTS *PAYBACK.*"
DADDY...?

AND WHAT COULD *YOU* POSSIBLY KNOW ABOUT THAT?
I KNOW I DID TIME WITH WILLIAM COLE WHEN I WAS YOUNGER.
CHICAGO POLICE DEPT.
SCREECH
"AND HE KEPT A *SOUVENIR.*"
THE LOOMIS KID MAILED IT TO HIM. WANTED TO REMIND WILLIAM WHAT HE TOOK AWAY.
AND WHAT THE FACE THAT WOULD KILL HIM AND WALLACE WOULD *LOOK* LIKE.
LOOK, WHAT I DID TO THE GRAYSONS...THERE'S NO EXCUSE I CAN MAKE. WHEN ALL THIS IS DONE, I GOTTA FINALLY FACE UP TO IT.
BUT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE GONNA DIE UNLESS WE STOP LOOMIS. IF YOU'RE WILLING TO LET THAT HAPPEN *JUST* TO TAKE ME DOWN NOW...
YOU THINK IT'S A COINCIDENCE THE PRANKSTER STAGED ALL THIS IN *OCTOBER?*
TONIGHT IS *HALLOWEEN.*
THIS IS *ALL* ABOUT TO BOIL OVER RIGHT WHERE IT *STARTED.*
...THEN MAYBE YOU AND THE PRANKSTER HAVE MORE IN COMMON THAN I *THOUGHT.*
"YOU *KNOW* I'M TELLING THE TRUTH."

IF YOU CAN SEE MY ACCOUNTS, THEN YOU KNOW I'VE NEVER STOLEN ANYTHING, MUCH LESS FIFTY-TWO MILLION--
Tsk tsk tsk.
I THOUGHT YOU WERE SMARTER THAN THAT, WALLACE. OF COURSE THERE WAS NEVER ANY MONEY.
BUT THE CITY SURE THINKS THERE WAS. HELL, THEY THINK THEY'RE BEING TERRORIZED BECAUSE YOU WON'T PAY IT BACK.
YOU TOOK AWAY WHAT I LOVED THE MOST AND PROFITED FROM IT.
I'M RETURNING THE FAVOR.
AND THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN THE WORLD TO MAYOR WALLACE COLE IS THE LOVE OF CHICAGO.
WELL, THAT'S GONE NOW.
THAT WAS THE BENEFIT OF TARGETING DIRTBAGS LIKE ALDERMAN LAINE AND JON CONAWAY FIRST.
THE PUBLIC SAW I WAS ONLY GOING AFTER REAL CRIMINALS.
AND BLOWING UP THE FIRST L-TRAIN FORCED YOUR PEOPLE TO SHUT DOWN THE OTHER RAIL LINES.
WHICH GAVE US THE TIME AND SPACE FOR TONIGHT.
YOU SEE, WALLACE, I'VE FILLED PILSEN STATION WITH ENOUGH EXPLOSIVES TO COLLAPSE THE ENTIRE SOUTH SIDE.
LISTEN TO ME. WHAT HAPPENED TO YOUR FATHER WAS AN ACCIDENT, OSWALD. IT WAS--
AND NOW, THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STOP THE COUNTDOWN IS THE MAN CHICAGO HATES.
--THE BIGGEST MISTAKE YOU AND YOUR BROTHER EVER MADE.

WELL, LOOK AT THE LUCK ON *YOU.*
AS LONG AS EVERYONE STAYS INDOORS, YOU'LL GET THERE WITH TIME TO *SPARE.*
WHERE'S THE FUN IN *THAT?*
THE HELL'S GOIN' ON?
IS THAT... THE *MAYOR?*
--WHAT'S *HE* DOING HERE--
--YOU GOT A LOT OF *NERVE* SHOWIN' YOUR FACE!

--MY HUSBAND'S DEAD 'CAUSE OF YOU!
--YOU SHOULDA PAID THE MONEY!
--WE TAKE HIM TO THE PRANKSTER, MAYBE HE'LL STOP!
YOU DON'T--YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND! THE PRANKSTER PUT A BOMB HERE! WE HAVE TO--
HE'S GOT A BOMB! HE SAID HE'S GOT A BOMB!
I DON'T CARE WHAT HE'S GOT! MY WIFE WAS ON THE FERRIS WHEEL, YOU CREEP!
OOF!
P-PLEASE... WE HAVE TO...
...HAVE TO STOP IT...
THE ONLY THING WE'RE GONNA STOP IS YOUR BREATHIN', YOU LYIN' SACK OF--
VRRRRRRRR

HANG ON!
W-WHOA!
VROOOOOM
DEET
KSSSSSSSSS
KILL HIM!
MY EYES!
WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
=KOFF KOFF=
TAKE 'EM OUT!
EVERY-BODY! LISTEN UP!
UGH!
GAH!
=KOFF KOFF=
AS MUCH AS I HATE TO SAY IT--
--YOU GUYS HAVE BEEN HAD!
=KOFF KOFF=
THE PRANKSTER WANTS THIS! YOU NEED TO GET BACK IN YOUR HOUSES NOW BEFORE--
NO!

PRANKSTER HAS THE UNDERGROUND STATION WIRED TO *EXPLODE!* IF IT GOES, THE WHOLE *NEIGHBORHOOD* WILL FALL INTO A SINKHOLE!
THERE'S A REMOTE TO STOP IT, DOWN IN THE--
CRUNCH
TAKE THE BIKE AND GET HIM AS FAR AWAY FROM HERE AS POSSIBLE! I'LL DEAL WITH THE BOMB!
YOU JUST *CAN'T* STAY OUT OF OTHER PEOPLE'S BUSINESS, CAN YOU?!
KZZT
GHNN...
ARE YOU--
GO!
GET HIM OUT OF HERE!

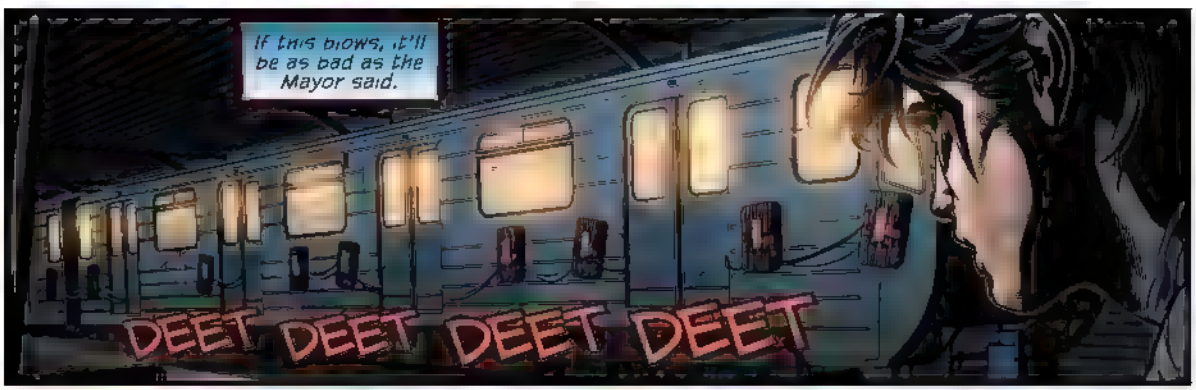
OOF!
YOU SHOULD HAVE SPENT THAT TIME SECURING YOUR SUIT.
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO HACK YOUR LENSES BEFORE--
TNK
--I WORK IN A KILL SWITCH?
WHA--
SMAK
GOOD QUESTION.

IT DOESN'T MATTER! YOU'RE TOO LATE!
He's wrong. I'm only a block away from the station.

There's still time.
There has to be.
POOM

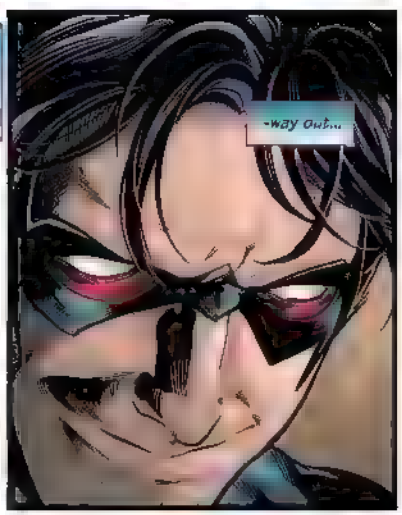
Subway's three flights down, buried deep under the neighborhood.

OH MAN...
DEET DEET DEET


If this blows, it'll be as bad as the Mayor said.
DEET DEET DEET DEET

I can't dismantle everything fast enough.
DEET
DEET

Think Grayson. There's gotta be another play here. There's gotta be a--


-way out...

00:15
00:09
SCREEEEE

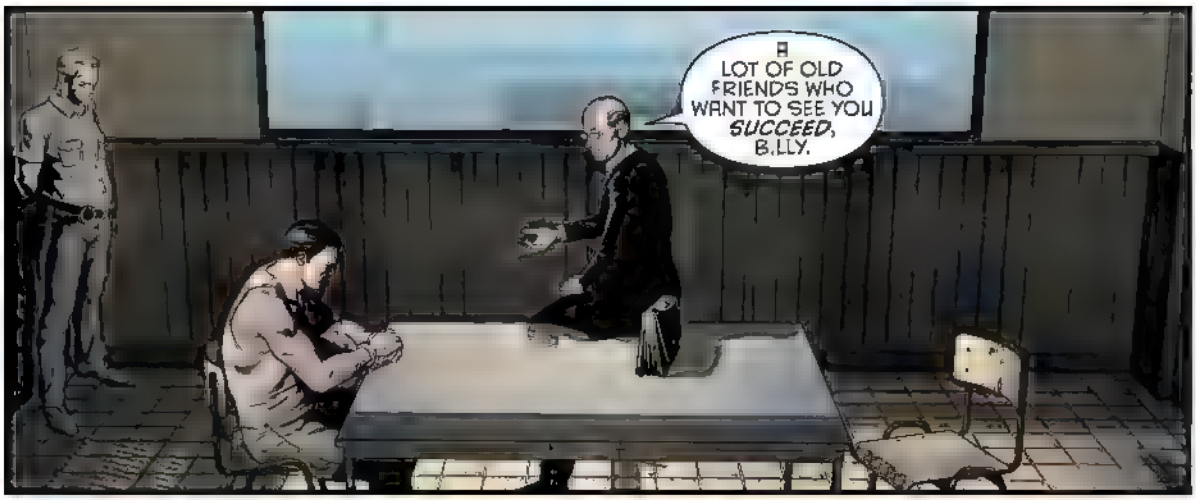
KA-THOOOM
WITH ~KOFF~ SECONDS TO SPARE EVEN...
GH!
NO...
HRK!
...NOT THIS TIME, YOU PAIN IN THE ASS.

YOU'VE BEEN MISERABLE SINCE WE MET, YOU KNOW THAT? I GAVE YOU A CHANCE AND YOU LAUGHED IN MY FACE.
WELL, WHO'S LAUGHING--
HZZ HZZ
GUH!
KRAK
SCREW YOU! SCREW YOU! YOU WANNA DIE A HERO?! CONGRATULATIONS!
YOU'RE A HERO NOBODY CARES ABOUT, YOU PIECE OF--
BLAM BLAM
BLAM

I HAD TO...HAD TO TAKE THE SHOT...
HE WAS GONNA KILL YOU.
BULLETS WENT CLEAN THROUGH. HE'LL BE FINE IF WE CAN GET HIM TO A DOCTOR.
NNNGG..
YOU KNOW, I ONLY STARTED CARRYING THIS THING WHEN YOU SHOWED UP AGAIN. FIGURED I WAS WILLING TO DO WHAT WAS NECESSARY... TO PUT YOU DOWN.
FUNNY HOW THINGS TURN OUT SOMETIMES, HUH?
GET YOUR HANDS UP! GET 'EM UP NOW!

Zucco spends a half hour talking to the police.
He doesn't take credit for saving everyone.
He doesn't take credit for saving me.
The only thing he asks is for someone to get word to his family.
When they put the handcuffs on and lead him to the squad car, all I can think about is how bad I wanted this.
To tell his son, "Daddy loves you."

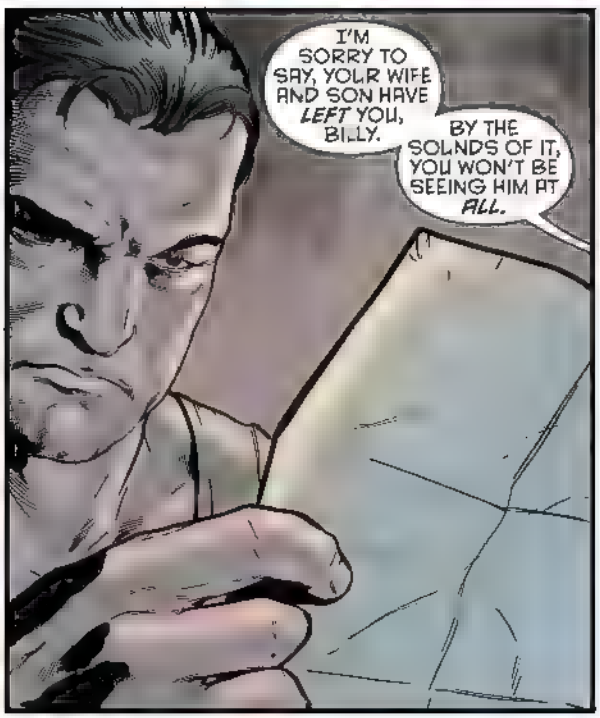
DICK'S APARTMENT.
LATER
OH MY GOD! YOU'RE NOT DEAD!
MICHAEL AND I WERE SO WORRIED!
THERE'S BEEN ALL THIS STUFF ON THE NEWS ABOUT YOU, ABOUT THIS ZUCCO GUY...
HE'S WHY YOU CAME HERE, ISN'T IT? I BET IT FEELS GREAT TO KNOW THEY FINALLY CAUGHT HIM.
YEAH... DEFINITELY...
UH-OH. I KNOW THAT LOOK. WHAT'S WRONG?
JOEY, DID YOU EVER SPEND SO MUCH TIME WANTING SOMETHING, THAT WHEN YOU FINALLY GOT IT...
...IT WASN'T WHAT YOU THOUGHT IT WOULD BE?
KIND OF A "BUYER'S REMORSE" THING?
YEAH... SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
WELL, THE WORST BUYER'S REMORSE I'VE EVER HAD WAS WITH A PAIR OF LEGGINGS.
THAT SAID, IF I HADN'T GONE LOOKING FOR THE LEGGINGS, I NEVER WOULD'VE FOUND THE STORE. NOW IT'S MY FAVORITE. I LOVE THE PLACE.
KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
YEAH... I THINK I DO.
'COURSE, IF YOU'RE GONNA STAY HERE MUCH LONGER...
I'M HOLDING DOWN THE COUCH?
SMART AND GOOD LOOKING.
WELCOME TO CHICAGO, GRAYSON.
"YOU HAVE A LOT OF PEOPLE LOOKING OUT FOR YOU."


A LOT OF OLD FRIENDS WHO WANT TO SEE YOU *SUCCEED*, BILLY.

FIRST AND FOREMOST, MY EMPLOYER WANTS TO HELP RESOLVE THIS FLYING GRAYSON NONSENSE ONCE AND FOR *ALL*.
ASSUMING YOU'LL *LET* US.

FACING WHAT I DID IS PART OF WHY I CAME BACK.
I WANT MY SON TO KNOW HIS DAD TOOK *RESPONSIBILITY* FOR HIS MISTAKES.
NOT COVERED THEM UP WITH MORE *LIES*.

WELL, YOU MAY WANT TO HAVE A LOOK AT THIS BEFORE YOU SAY ANYTHING ELSE.
WHAT IS IT?
A *LETTER*. THE POLICE RECOVERED IT, ALONG WITH DIVORCE PAPERS, FROM YOUR HOUSE IN THE *CITY*.


I'M SORRY TO SAY, YOUR WIFE AND SON HAVE *LEFT* YOU, BILLY.
BY THE SOUNDS OF IT, YOU WON'T BE SEEING HIM AT *ALL*.

YOU SON OF A B TCH! WHAT DID YOU DO TO THEM?! WHERE ARE THEY?!
THEY'RE GONE, BILLY! LOOK AT THE HANDWRITING! YOU KNOW IT'S THE TRUTH!
NOW YOU CAN ACCEPT OUR HELP, BEAT THESE CHARGES, AND GO BACK TO YOUR OLD LIFE.
OR, YOU CAN GO TO JAIL AS A MARTYR FOR A LIFE THAT NO LONGER EXISTS.
I WANT YOU TO THINK CAREFULLY BEFORE YOU ANSWER, BILLY. WHAT YOU SAY NEXT DETERMINES EVERYTHING.
DON'T CALL ME THAT.
I'M SORRY?
BILLY LESTER ISN'T REAL.
THEN TELL ME--AND MY EMPLOYER--WHAT WE SHOULD CALL YOU.
TONY ZUCCO.
"YOU'RE READY FOR WHAT COMES NEXT?"

I'D BE LYING IF I SAID I HAD ANY IDEA WHAT COMES NEXT, MAXWELL.
NIGHTWING IS JUST THE BEGINNING.
COPYCATS, "INSPIRED BYS," VENDETTA SEEKERS... THEY'LL START POPPING UP IN CHICAGO NOW. THAT'S THE WAY THIS'LL GO.
NIGHTWING WILL HAVE AN EVEN WORSE EFFECT ON THIS CITY THAN THE PRANKSTER.
AND WE HAVE TO BE READY FOR IT.
HM.
YOU THINK I'M WRONG?
NO, I JUST...
...I REMEMBER A TIME WHEN GUYS LIKE AETHER AND GHOST-WALKER MADE A REAL DIFFERENCE HERE.
PEOPLE LOOKED UP TO THEM.
HELL, I USED TO BE GHOSTWALKER'S BIGGEST FAN. BEFORE... EVERYTHING HAPPENED.
THERE'S A PART OF ME THAT WONDERS...MAYBE WE GOT IT WRONG WITH NIGHTWING. MAYBE...
...NIGHTWING IS BETTER THAN THAT?
THERE ARE NO HEROES, MICHAEL.
NOT ANYMORE.
AND FOR CHICAGO'S SAKE, WE HAVE TO KEEP IT THAT WAY.
BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY.
NEXT ISSUE: ZERO YEAR!

CHANNEL
52
IT'S SPACE GENOCIDE AS THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS GOES TO WAR ACROSS THE UNIVERSE!
I'M BETHANY SNOW AND THIS IS CHANNEL 52!
LET'S GO RIGHT TO A. BUG IN OUR SITUATION ROOM... BUG?

REPORTS ARE COMING IN FROM SCORES OF INTERSTELLAR OUTPOSTS CONFIRMING THAT THE GREEN LANTERN CORPS HAS ENGAGED THE BEING KNOWN AS RELIC IN A WIDESPREAD SERIES OF BATTLES.
EVEN THOUGH RELIC IS A SINGLE ENTITY, IT IS BECOMING CLEAR THAT THE GLC ARE OVERMATCHED.

EVEN WITH THE OTHER COLORED LANTERN ARMIES JOINING IN, THIS HAS THE MAKINGS OF AN EXTREMELY VOLATILE SITUATION WITH MANY CASUALTIES EXPECTED!
I'VE BROUGHT IN CHANNEL 52'S RESIDENT EXPERT IN EXTRAPLANETARY POLITICS TO GIVE US THE LATEST. VARTOX?
AYE, BUG. IT'S ALWAYS BAD WHEN THESE LANTERN CORPS STOP FIGHTING EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEY'RE SCARED OF ONE BAD GUY.

WHAT I CAN TELL OUR VIEWERS IS THAT RELIC'S MISSION IS THE TOTAL ANNIHILATION OF EACH LANTERN CORPS.
THE PROBLEM HERE IS WHAT HAPPENS IF THE LANTERNS FAIL? COULD EARTH BE RELIC'S NEXT TARGET?

YIKES!
TAKE A GANDER AT OUR ANIMATION SIMULATION! THE SLAUGHTER IS ON!
UH... YOU DIDN'T SHOW US THIS BEFORE WE WENT ON THE AIR. IT'S AWESOME!
NEXT I'LL SHOW YOU THE ODDS MOST OF THE GAMBLING COLONIES ARE SETTING ON WHICH LANTERNS WILL SUFFER THE WORST CASUALTIES!
HERE'S A HINT— BLUE!
THAT'S NOT REALLY A HINT, BUDDY.
UGH. WE GOT OFF TRACK AGAIN.
WE'LL BE RIGHT BACK AFTER THESE MESSAGES... I HOPE. THIS IS CHANNEL 52.

NAHGA